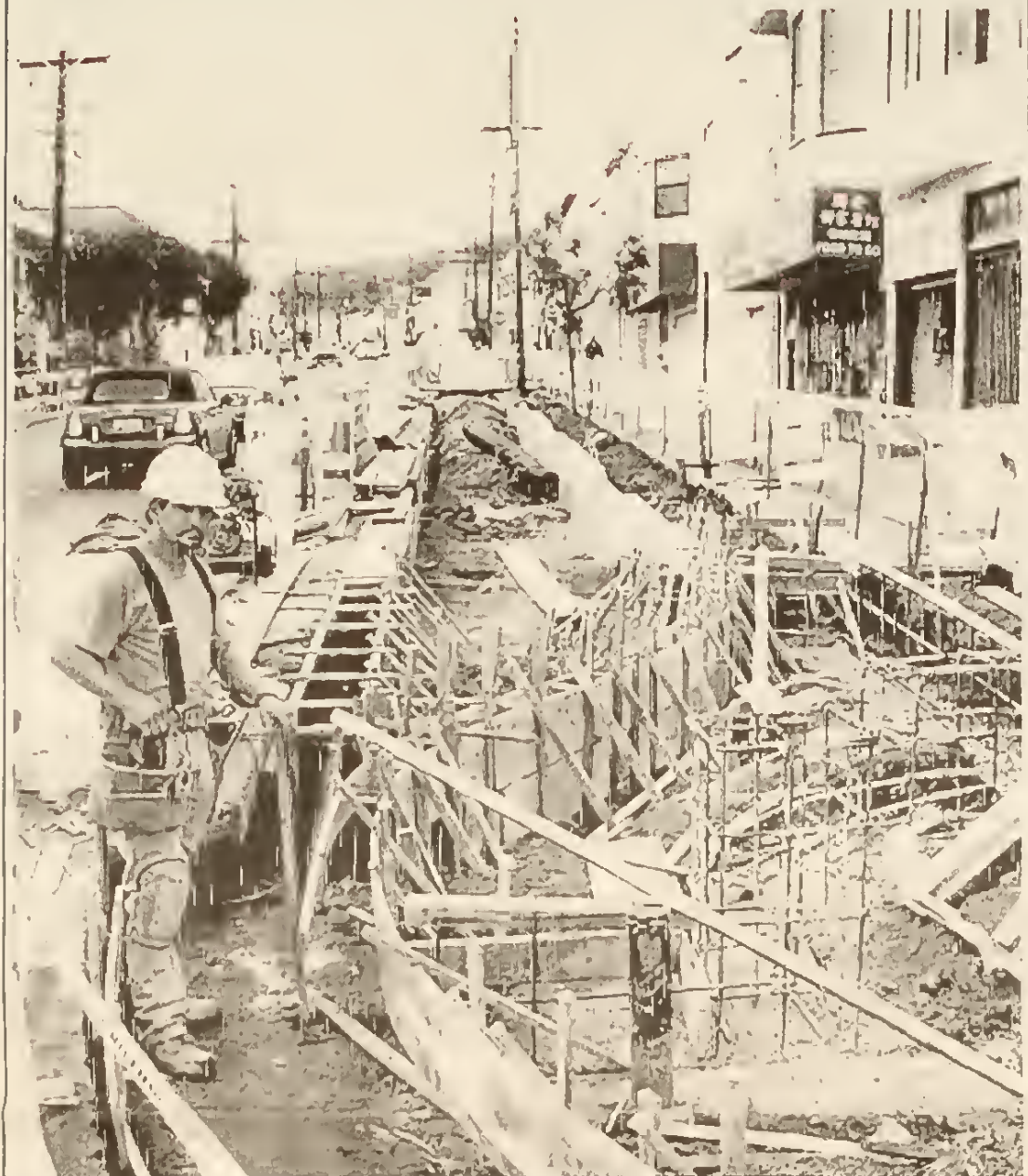


Leland Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project



Driving on Leland Avenue these days can be a little tricky, but Valley residents know the end result will be worth the wait.

Low Stacks Will be Featured in New Sunnydale Building Blocks

by Betty Parshall

On Saturday, January 23 about sixty participants gathered to see the presentation of the design layout of the building blocks that will emerge in the new Sunnydale. The master plan with 1,700 housing units is to allow for a better mix of households at different incomes.

Laurie Volk, an expert in creating mixed income communities, recommends that 40 percent of the housing should be market rate. Sixty percent will include the existing number of public housing units along with "tax credit" affordable housing.

In response to previous questions about how many units of various sizes are planned a chart was presented:

*One bedroom: 580 units, 34 percent of total.

*Two bedroom: 804 units, 47 percent of total.

*Three bedroom: 303 units, 18 percent of total.

*Four bedroom: 12 units, 1 percent of total.

At present, the overall parking ratio in the master plan is .85 off-street parking spaces for each unit, and 1.18 total parking spaces for each unit off and on the street. The City requires an independent traffic study to describe car, bike, pedestrian and bus traffic expected and the impact on the neighborhood. The study will be made this year and presented at another community meeting.

Major objectives that guide the design process were described. In addition to mixed income and the mix of units, safety and security is to be enhanced because buildings will include either unit entries, stoops or porches that face the street or park so there are "eyes" on the street.

All buildings should be of the same high quality design and construction regardless of the income level of residents. To accomplish this, there are to be a variety of architectural styles by different architects.

At least 30 percent of the housing will be accessible or adaptable for disabled and senior residents. Each building is to include basic amenities such as a community room, laundry machines, secure bike and car parking, and secure

outdoor courtyards for the residents of each building.

Various options are being considered for the construction period, with the priority of causing the least amount of inconvenience to residents, and these options will also be presented to the community for discussion.

Small groups of six to eight people met to generate questions and concerns and each group then reported out to the entire meeting.

*Is any consideration being given to the impacts on the greater community due to the increase in housing units in both Sunnydale and the Schlage Lock property?

*What is the timeline for completion of the project?

*What is the ratio of bathrooms to bedrooms in the units?

*Why are there only 12 units with four bedrooms? What about large families?

*What provisions if any will there be regarding smoking?

*How will garbage and recycling collection be handled? Could there be incentives to encourage residents to participate fully in recycling?

*Will disaster preparedness be included in the design?

*How wide are the sidewalks?

*Can video cams be placed on streets?

*How might noise complaints be handled?

*What size will rooms be in the various units? What floor covering will be used?

These and other questions will be addressed at future meetings. The master plan design will be presented in the near future to the SF Planning Department. The process of review, preparation of the required environmental impact report and its review, and final approval by the City will take about one year.

To contact Mercy/Related HOPE SF: 1657 Sunnydale Avenue, SF 94134, (415) 452-9744

*Tonja Boykin TBoykin@mercyhousing.org

*Michelle Daniels, Community Liaison MDaniels2mercyhousing.org

*Jasmin Khabay, Community Liaison JKhabay@mercyhousing.org

*Ramie Dare, Housing Developer RDare@mercyhousing.org

*Cantonese participants can call Paul Lam: 333-9956, Plam@mercyhousing.org

Mayor Announces New Initiative to Fight Truancy

Mayor Newsom on Jan. 15 launched the new Truancy Assessment and Referral Center (TARC) to address chronic truancy and close the achievement gap in San Francisco schools.

TARC will be a city-wide one stop location allowing police to hand off truant youth to the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and Community Based Organizations. TARC will assess youth and make the appropriate referrals to reengage them in the academic process.

"The 21st century economy demands an educated, prepared workforce," said Mayor Newsom. "We must rise to this challenge and close the graduation gap that afflicts underprivileged communities in San Francisco."

TARC is a joint effort with the SFUSD, SF Juvenile Probation Department (SFJPD), San Francisco

Police Department (SFPD), Department of Children, Youth, and their Families (DCYF), and our community partners, Huckleberry Youth Services and Urban Service YMCA, to open a new drop-in facility at 44 Gough St.

"As San Francisco's District Attorney, I see what happens on the back end of school failures: young lives are being lost to street violence or prison time at an appalling rate," said District Attorney Kamala Harris. "Children will either get their education in the streets or in school. Combating truancy is a smart approach to crime prevention."

By addressing truancy, the City hopes to close the graduation gap. In San Francisco last year, 32 percent of African American, 19 percent of Caucasian and 19 percent of Latino students didn't graduate public high school.

All students coming into 44 Gough will first be referred to the Community Assessment and Referral Center (CARC) for appropriate assessment before moving on to TARC. Whereas CARC provides a single point of entry for crisis intervention, assessment, service integration and referral of arrested youth, TARC will be focused solely on truant youth.

TARC, staffed by a SFUSD Counselor and a Community Based case manager will do an educational assessment of the youth and determine the best next steps to reengage the youth into the educational process, and refer them out for wrap-around services in the community.

This innovative collaboration between CARC and TARC is the first-in-the-nation that leverages existing city resources to specifically target young people who are chronically absent.

Cell Phone Radiation Labeling Legislation Introduced

Mayor Gavin Newsom on Jan. 26 announced major consumer right-to-know legislation that will require cell phone retailers to post cell phone radiation levels at point of sale.

"Telephone manufacturers currently disclose cell phone radiation levels to the federal government," said Mayor Newsom. "This same information should also be made easily accessible to the consumer."

While more research needs to be conducted on the safety of cell phone radiation, recent studies published in internationally regarded journals indicate that long term exposure to cell phone radiation may be responsible for increased rates of brain and salivary cancer, as well as other serious health problems. With the

growing number of people using cell phones on a daily basis and the increasing use by young children, the questions around potential health effects are significant enough to warrant precautionary action.

"In addition to protecting the consumers' right to know," said Mayor Newsom, "this legislation will encourage telephone manufacturers to redesign their devices to function at lower radiation levels. This is similar to Prop 65, which dramatically reduced public exposure to toxic materials because chemical companies removed toxic ingredients from their products in order to avoid product warnings."

Cell phone radiation is regulated by both the FDA and the FCC, with a legal limit of 1.6 Watts per kilo-

gram of SAR (specific absorption rate). Cell phone radiation varies widely depending on the model, with SARs between 0.19 and 1.6. There is no technological reason why a cell phone needs to emit the maximum allowed levels of radiation. Phones that emit lower amounts of radiation work just as well, and sport just as many features.

"I am not suggesting by any means that people should be fearful of using a cell phone," said Mayor Newsom. "Cell phones are an integral part of modern life; however, there are simple things that can be done to minimize exposure to the radiation emitted by the telephone such as using a headset, speaker phone or texting, and turning off the phone when it's not in use."

Meet Leland Avenue Project Artists



Image Courtesy of REBAR

The Leland Avenue Streetscape Project will be finished this summer.

Join the San Francisco Arts Commission and the artist team REBAR on Monday, Feb. 8 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Joe Leland coffee shop, 28 Leland Ave. to learn more about the new sculpture that will be located at the corner of Leland Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard.

On November 2, 2009, the San Francisco Arts Commission approved the artist team REBAR's design for the new public art project that will be installed as part of the Leland Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project.

Scheduled for completion by early summer 2010, Street Life is

a playful sculpture made from recycled parking meter heads attached to 18-foot arching, steel poles.

The cluster of parking meters was designed to appear as if it had grown to a whimsically tall height and is intended to remind the viewer of swaying grain or other organic forms.

For more information about the Leland Avenue public art project, visit www.sfbartscommission.org/pubartcollection or contact Mary Chou at mary.chou@sfgov.org or at 415/252-3215. For more information about REBAR, visit www.rebargroup.org

Grapevine Mailbox

Improvement Meetings To Upgrade McLaren Park

As some of you may have heard, we have upcoming public workshops to discuss the improvement needs at McLaren Park.

The McLaren Park Needs Assessment & Action Plan Workshops will gather thoughts and ideas from you on the top priorities for improvements to McLaren Park, and together come up with an action plan that will have practical and measurable goals to help improve the park.

There is a grant we will apply to improve park features in June.

The Dates for the workshops are: Tuesday Mar. 23 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Crocker Amazon Playground Clubhouse, and Tuesday May 25 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Louis Sutter Playground Roundhouse

Some of the improvement needs to be discussed include renovation

of the children's playgrounds, picnic areas, pathways, pavements, pedestrian safety in and around roads, as well as other amenities. Please invite everyone who would be interested in participating in these workshops, and forward the attached flyer to your email lists and newsletters.

Tina Kim, SF Recreation and Parks

Common Uncommonly

See if you can figure out what these words have in common:

1. Banana
2. Dresser
3. Grammar
4. Potato
5. Revive
6. Uneven
7. Assess

Are you peeking or have you already given up? Give it another try.

Answer: In all of the words listed, if you take the first letter, place it at the end of the word, and then spell the word backwards, it will be the same word.

Federal Health Reform a Tipping Point, Not the End Game

by Senator Mark Leno

As California faces another year of skyrocketing health care costs, many of us have followed the developments of federal health care reform with anticipation. Even though I recognize that federal health care reform in 2010 will bring positive and worthwhile changes, it was disappointing to see the insurance industry succeed at scaling back reform. However, we should not be discouraged. Underneath this historic step forward is a true groundswell of support for universal health care. Across the nation, Americans are coming to the conclusion that private insurance companies have failed in their obligation to administer health coverage, and polls show that strong majorities support a Medicare for all model of health care.

With every passing year, rising insurance premiums suffocate economic growth and threaten the middle class standard of living. As premiums skyrocket, quality of care and access to care are rapidly declining. Benefits are being cut, medical bankruptcy is on the rise and provider reimbursements are stagnating. Public infrastructure like schools, roads, police and fire departments are directly threatened by these rising costs since public revenues can never hope to increase fast enough to keep up with health care premiums for teachers, police officers, and fire fighters.

Fortunately, California is leading the nation with a plan to establish a universal health care system that will strike directly at the heart of rising health care costs.

The California Universal Health Care Act, which I introduced last year, provides every Californian with comprehensive universal health care and is fully funded with the money that California already spends on health care. Senate Bill 810 builds on our current system of privately delivered health care but is funded by a single, comprehensive health insurance plan that covers all residents of the state, allowing them to choose their own doctors and hospitals.

SB 810 works by pooling together the money that government, employers and individuals spend on health care each year and using that money more efficiently to ensure that 95% of every health care dollar is devoted to actual health care, rather than clinical and administrative waste. Californians will spend about \$200 billion this year on health care, but more than 30 percent of our health care budget is wasted on the administrative bureaucracy—the result of having thousands of different health care plans. We already spend more than enough money to care for our entire population, and yet we have millions of people who remain uninsured. Numerous studies have shown that a single-payer, universal health care system not only cuts costs in the first year, but it also contains the growth of health care spending over the long term.

You may hear some antagonists argue that we can not afford single-payer, universal health care because of our ongoing state budget crisis. On the contrary, we can not continue to ignore the cost savings a single-payer health care plan will provide our state and its residents. That is why cities,

counties, school districts, health care providers and others have joined the hundreds of organizations that support single-payer, universal health care. The State of California, local agencies and businesses spend a large percent of payroll dollars on health care costs, which continue to grow three times faster than wages each year. Stabilizing crushing health care costs not only makes sense, but is critical in helping us address our fiscal challenges.

SB 810 provides immediate relief to California businesses that are struggling to pay for their employee health benefits, saving them them millions of dollars in the first year alone. Such a policy will inevitably bring new business to the state since health care costs in California would be significantly lower than in other states and more competitive with other industrial nations.

Californians want and deserve the state-of-the-art, modern universal health care system that is envisioned in SB 810. I hope you will join me in supporting reform at the state level. California needs this bill. Californians support it, and we will not stop until we achieve it.

To learn more about the California Universal Health Care Act, visit our website, www.senate.ca.gov/leno or California OneCare at www.californiaonecare.org. Senator Mark Leno represents the Third Senate District of California, which includes portions of San Francisco and Sonoma Counties and all of Marin County. He can be reached via the web at www.sen.ca.gov/leno, by phone in the San Francisco District Office at 415-557-1300 or San Rafael District Office at 415-479-6612, or by e-mail, SenatorLeno@senate.ca.gov

Central Subway Final Design to Commence

Mayor Newsom and the SFMTA today announced on Jan. 8 that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has granted the Central Subway approval to enter into Final Design (FD) for the Central Subway Project, which is Phase II of the Third Street Light Rail Project that will connect communities from Visitacion Valley to Chinatown with modern, convenient light rail.

The Third Street Light Rail project represents the most significant investment in the expansion of the Muni system in generations.

"This federal endorsement is crucial to building the Central Subway and improving our environment," said Mayor Gavin Newsom. "Our appreciation goes out to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senator Dianne Feinstein and Senator Barbara Boxer for their continued leadership and support of light rail expansion in San Francisco."

"We are deeply gratified by this decision," said Nathaniel P. Ford Sr., SFMTA Executive Director/CEO. "We are making tremendous progress toward improved transportation for the communities along the congested corridor that the Central Subway will serve."

This FTA endorsement marks a crucial milestone for the Central Subway project. Approval to enter into Final Design means that for every dollar the SFMTA spends on Final Design for the Central Subway Project, the SFMTA will be reimbursed with federal funds.

In 2009, the Central Subway project received a positive review as part of the technically rigorous federal New Starts program with a "medium-high" project justification rating and "medium-high" overall rating. The project also received a "high" rating for both environmental and transit supportive land use benefits. The project recently received \$6 million as part of the federal Fiscal Year 2010 transportation appropriations bill.

Approval to enter into Final Design comes as the Central Subway is moving forward on a variety of fronts. The project is negotiating and awarding design contracts for the tunnel, stations and systems work, and this month utility relocation work is beginning near the tunnel portal and the future Moscone Station in the South of Market neighborhood.

The 1.7-mile Central Subway will extend light rail service with a surface stop on 4th Street near Brannan Street and subway service with stations at the Moscone Center, Union

Square and Chinatown neighborhoods. It will operate as an extension of the T Third light rail line which opened for full revenue service in April 2007.

The two-phase Third Street Light Rail Project will unite the City's established civic, business, retail and cultural centers with the diverse communities along the light rail line and encourage economic revitalization along the entire corridor.

The project is expected to begin service in December 2018 and is estimated to cost \$1.6 billion, with almost \$1 billion slated to come from the federal government. The SFMTA continues to work with local, state and regional partners to secure non-federal funding to work toward a Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration in Fiscal Year 2011.

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has estimated that for every \$1 billion spent on transportation infrastructure projects, 30,000 jobs will be created.

During these difficult economic times, the progress and development of the Central Subway will employ thousands of individuals throughout the Bay Area and beyond. In addition, this project will enhance the City's transportation system by making it more efficient and environmentally friendly.

"This welcome news is a great way to start the New Year," said Board of Supervisors President David Chiu. "The Central Subway project will increase Muni ridership, reduce our carbon footprint and provide construction jobs for San Franciscans at a critical time."

Housing Authority Waiting List Closing

The San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) Commission authorized the Executive Director to close the Housing Authority's public housing waiting list on January 31, 2010 as outlined in the SFHA's July 2008 Admission and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP).

Currently, the SFHA manages 6,262 public housing units. As of Jan. 14, 2009, the public housing waiting list was 29,977. On any given day the total number of vacant units throughout the SFHA's property management portfolio is 104 units.

On average, a family waits approximately ten years to move from the bottom of the waiting list to the top of the waiting list in order to be offered an available vacant unit.

Black History Month Kick Off Celebration

Mayor Gavin Newsom and the African American Historical and Cultural Society celebrate the 2010 Black History Month Kick Off Celebration on Friday Feb. 5 at 12 noon in the Mayor's Rotunda located at: San Francisco City Hall.

Federal Funds Will Speed Cleanup at Hunters Point Shipyard

Mayor Gavin Newsom announced Jan. 21 that \$92 million has been secured for the cleanup of the Hunters Point Shipyard in the upcoming Fiscal Year.

Mayor Newsom, together with significant leadership from Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senator Dianne Feinstein, has worked aggressively to get the federal government to fulfill its long-overdue obligation to adequately fund the cleanup of the shipyard.

Between Fiscal Years 1991 through 2010, a total of \$714.2 million has been appropriated by Congress for the United States Navy's clean-up operations at Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard.

"This is a significant achievement for the entire City and in particular the Bayview-Hunters Point community and will bring new life and opportunity to one of our most at-risk neighborhoods," said Mayor Newsom. "These funds will allow the City to continue to move forward with plans to transform the long abandoned shipyard from an environmental blight into a job-producing economic engine for all of San Francisco."

"These additional funds will allow the Navy to stay on track to complete cleanup and transfer of the vast majority of the remaining parcels by 2013, including all of the areas necessary for the City's extensive redevelopment plans to proceed," said Speaker Nancy Pelosi. "As a result, plans for new 'clean and green' businesses and industry can move forward, creating jobs and economic opportunity for the Bayview community and putting the Bay Area in the forefront of the emerging green economy."

The cleanup of the Hunters Point Shipyard is anticipated to generate on average 1,500 construction jobs per year for the expected 16 year life of the development across a wide range of building trades.

The project will also create approximately 10,700 permanent jobs across an equally wide range of income and skill levels, including retail and sales, building and open space maintenance and

management, and in commercial, office, light industrial and research and development jobs.

The environmental restoration that will be achieved through the Navy's clean-up work allows the city to advance the transformation of the shuttered base into an economic engine.

Over its expected 15-20 year build out, the Project will include up to 10,500 residential units, about 32 percent of which will be offered at below market affordable rates; approximately 336 acres of new and improved public parks, open spaces and water front trails and plazas, 885,000 square feet of re-

gional and neighborhood serving retail space; 255,000 square feet of new and renovated replacement space for the Shipyard artists, including a new "Arts District" supporting the vibrant artist community; 2.6 million square feet of commercial light industrial, research and development and office space, including a new United Nations Global Compact Global Warming and Technology Center; and improved land and supporting infrastructure for a new football stadium for the San Francisco 49ers, including necessary parking areas and transportation improvements.

YOU'RE INVITED!

**Universal Paragon Corporation invites you to:
Workshop 1 - Open House
February 20 and 21, 2010
for the**

**Visitacion Valley Transit-Oriented Development
Open Space & Streetscape Master Plan
+ Phase 1 Master Plan**

Please join us and share your thoughts for the design of public spaces at the former Schlage factory site. The workshop will be held as an "Open House," so you are welcome to attend at any time of the day, and stay for as long as you wish. The design team will be available to describe some of the project site's characteristics & past planning processes, discuss its potential, and collect your input and ideas for the development of the Open Space and Streetscape Master Plan and the Phase 1 Master Plan.

Workshop 1 - Open House

Saturday Feb 20, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday Feb 21, 1p.m. to 5 p.m.

(Wrap-Up Presentation at 5-5:30 p.m.)

**Visitacion Valley Elementary School - Auditorium
55 Schwerin Street at Leland Avenue**

Refreshments and snacks will be provided!

Please visit www.renewvisvalley.com for more information.



Editor: Len Applano

Published monthly by Visitacion Valley Community Center, 50 Raymond Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94134, (415) 467-9300, Fax 467-3757, vsvalley@earthlink.net, www.vsvalleygrapevine.com
Opinions expressed in the Visitacion Valley Grapevine are not necessarily those of Visitacion Valley Community Center
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Open House for District 10 Board of Supervisors Candidate Steve Moss

Steve Moss is a community leader who has spent his career in public service. He has a proven track record of successful leadership in the public sector, and a wealth of experience in managing complex projects and programs. He is a strong advocate for the community and is committed to making a positive impact on the lives of the people of District 10.

Sunday, February 28, 1 to 4 p.m.

Please RSVP: steven@moss.net or 415.643.9578



Qualified Leadership for the Community
For more information:

MossForDistrict10.com

Steve Moss: Qualified Leadership for the Community

Steve Moss has the vision, experience, and passion to lead District 10's future — and the experience to direct our resources where we're needed most. With chronic government budget deficits and a weak economy, Steve's management skills, public policy experience, creativity, and commitment to the community are needed more than ever.

Steve has worked on public finance issues for the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the White House. He's managed leaders over the past decade as a thought leader in millions of dollars in the district's largest sectors of local industry, and lived working families and small business. Hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in lower energy and water bills.

If elected Steve will work for us to:

> Create a City government that gets things done.

Steve will increase the community's economic and local efforts to achieve agreed-upon goals. He has a proven track record of successful leadership for the district, but winning.

> Place families and neighborhood businesses first.

Children need high quality after-school programs and engaging places to play and learn. Small businesses should be provided with every opportunity to succeed. As a father Steve knows the challenges of raising a child in an expensive City. As a small business owner, nonprofit executive, and neighborhood newspaper editor/publisher Steve has demonstrated his commitment to neighborhood businesses.

> Make our neighborhoods safer.

A \$100 million investment in recreation programs can turn a young adult into a strong, confident and forward-looking leader. Bringing families first — especially those facing tough times — and providing them with essential services will all be better off.

> Encourage responsible development.

Sustainable San Francisco was once an economic engine for San Francisco. It can be that way again. But development needs to reflect progress towards better communities — the creation of green jobs, designation of an open space state-of-the-art transportation alternatives, and best ideas that will shape a future we all want to live in.

District 10 faces much more than a few challenges. It needs a representative that will bring a full equal share of public resources, attention, and respect. Steve Moss will make that happen.



For more details about Steve's platform, qualifications, and accomplishments, visit:

MossForDistrict10.com

Photo: Steve Moss for District 10 Supervisor, Thomas Pera, Publisher

家庭开放日 第十街区监事会 候选人 Steve Moss

诚挚邀请您到Steve位于 Potrero Hill 的家中做客，共同商议讨论社区的未来。Steve 希望与重要的社区议题，让社区的居民。同时他也会畅谈如果当选后，可以代表我们在旧金山监事会做些什么。

周日 2月28日 下午1点到4点

敬请赐复: steven@moss.net 或者 415.643.9578



合格的社区领导力

更多信息，敬请登录以下网页:

MossForDistrict10.com

Photo: Steve Moss for District 10 Supervisor, Thomas Pera, Publisher

Steve Moss: 合格的社区领导力

Steve Moss 拥有领导社区、公共政策经验。他拥有在旧金山最富挑战性的地方，在政府和社区领导者的经验。他拥有在旧金山最富挑战性的地方，在政府和社区领导者的经验。

Steve 曾在美国财政部和自然资源部，负责公共财政事宜。在過去十年中，他领导了多个重要的项目，包括在旧金山的多个重要项目中担任领导角色。

史蒂夫说，Steve 将致力于:

> 创建一个有解决能力的政府

Steve 将致力于创建一个，能够解决社区面临的问题，并为社区的未来做出决策的政府。他的目标是建立一个，能够解决社区面临的问题，并为社区的未来做出决策的政府。

> 将家庭和邻居的事情放在首位

作为一个父亲，Steve 知道家庭和社区的重要性。他将致力于创建一个，能够为家庭和邻居提供更好服务的政府。他的目标是建立一个，能够为家庭和邻居提供更好服务的政府。

> 让我们的街区更加安全

Steve 将致力于创建一个，能够为社区提供更好安全服务的政府。他的目标是建立一个，能够为社区提供更好安全服务的政府。

> 鼓励负责任的发展

Steve 将致力于创建一个，能够为社区提供更好发展服务的政府。他的目标是建立一个，能够为社区提供更好发展服务的政府。

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MossForDistrict10.com

Photo: Steve Moss for District 10 Supervisor, Thomas Pera, Publisher

California Gas Prices Climb As Temperatures Drop

Everything from bitter cold weather to rumors of an economic recovery are playing a role in rising gas prices throughout the country. According to the latest report from AAA Northern California, average gas prices in most metro areas across the northern part of the state have already surpassed the \$3 a gallon mark.

In all but three metro areas where AAA tracks gas prices there has been a double digit increase in the average price compared to AAA's last survey on December 8. All but four of those metro areas have an average price

above \$3.00 for regular unleaded, the octane used as a benchmark for price comparison.

"Cold weather over much of the country has helped to increase the price at the pump. As the cost of heating oil rises, gasoline prices are following close behind," said AAA Northern California spokesperson Matt Skryja. "Also, optimism about the potential for economic recovery over the past few days has certainly played a role in the rising gas prices, as investors anticipate additional demand."

California's average gas price was the third highest among all

50 states according to the Jan. 12 report from AAA, which tracks gasoline prices as a service to consumers. The Golden State's average for a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline was \$3.06, up 15 cents since the last report. For perspective, that's \$1.06 more than California's average price on this date last year, when it was \$2.

Northern California gas prices averaged \$3.05, up 17 cents from December. In the San Francisco Bay Area, motorists paid an average price of \$3.13, a 14 cent drop. The national average price of \$2.75 was up by 12 cents,

which is 96 cents more than the national price last year, when it was \$1.79.

There appear to be several factors in play that are causing oil and gas prices to rise. Cold weather has convinced some investors that heating oil demand will continue to spike and that oil and gas prices will follow. That trend could be tempered as temperatures warm. Additionally, a weak dollar is spurring investors to buy more oil, which is helping to drive up the price. Optimistic manufacturing data from China and the United States is also encouraging news for investors, who look at increases in manufacturing as an

indication that there is increasing demand for oil and gasoline.

The least expensive average price in Northern California was found in Ukiah where unleaded was \$2.97. Of all the metro areas in Northern California where gas prices are tracked by AAA, Tahoe City had the highest average price at \$3.30, which was also the highest price in the lower 48 states.

The least expensive gasoline in the country was found in Casper and Cheyenne, Wyoming where the average price of gas was \$2.39. Wailuku, Hawaii, holds the dubious crown for the highest average price in the nation, at \$3.73 per gallon.

Visitacion Valley History Project

by Betty Parshall

Rainy School Days in the Old Valley

Before the building boom that followed the 1940s, Visitacion Valley had more vacant land than residences. On rainy days we walked down the hill from Wilde Avenue to school swathed in slickers or hooded raincoats (mine was plaid) with galoshes pulled over our shoes. I hated the galoshes, they were hard to pull on and invariably pulled my shoes off too when I removed them.

My older brother and I usually walked with the two kids who lived next door. At the time of this little story Gloria Bischoff was 12. Her brother Carl and my brother were 10, I was a mere squat of 7. This morning was clear after a night of heavy rain, and the sidewalks were still wet. More to the point, dozens of snails were also out, seeking relief from the soaked, muddy soil of all the vacant lots.

As we walked along, Carl smashed snails with a "Take that!" for each victim. Gloria scolded him for being so cruel but he kept it up. "They eat my mother's garden," was his response.

Gloria continued to nag him, pointing out that these snails were nowhere near their mother's garden, until Carl finally picked up one of the biggest snails he could find, yelled "Here, if you like them so much take this one!" and smashed it down on the top of her bare head. She went screaming back up the hill to home, Carl continued his murderous crusade, and my brother and I were quietly awestruck by his terrible crime.

Later we learned that Carl was kept in after school for a few days as punishment. That was one memorable rainy day.

Rainy days during the school year had their good and bad points. We couldn't go outside for recess, and were seated in the school auditorium to eat our lunches. (The school cafeteria hadn't been built yet.) Naturally there was a lot of restless fidgeting and continual reminders to lower our voices during the 30-minute lunchtime. The good point was that we were let go early to make up for the lost playtime. I'm sure our teachers must have breathed sighs of relief at our departure, and we were happy with the early release and the prospect of some serious puddle jumping on the way back home.



Muddy Olden Days

Older folks who provided their oral histories mentioned how muddy the roads were in the days before paving was laid on all the streets. During the wet season, delivery wagons from the Valley went along San Bruno Avenue up the hill to Harkness and then to hillside homes. Rutland Street was a mud slide.

Here's a quote from retired harbor Al Cinti. He was asked if the roads were paved when he came here as a boy.

"Yes, up there on Teddy they were. When I first came here, Leland wasn't all the way paved, just up to Rutland, and they had wooden side walks. Mr. Rossi was here on Leland (the pharmacy) and the water pump company was down the street, and the hotel and bar on the corner."

Rutland Street looking north near Leland Avenue in 1916 presented a striking contrast to the Visitacion Valley neighborhood of today.

Do you have a memory to share? We'd love to hear from you. bparshal@flash.net or mail your story to Visitacion Valley History Project c/o B. Parshall, 386 Wilde Ave., S.F. 94134

About Art in Visitacion Valley



Russel Morine

The Art of Stained Glass

by Betty Parshall

The stained glass window centered on St. James Presbyterian Church depicts the Sower from one of Jesus' parables in which he likened his preaching to a man sowing seeds. Like seed sown on rocky ground and failing to take root, some people received his words with joy but quickly forgot them as they had "no root in themselves." Seeds sown among thorns failed as his words failed to reach those who were too immersed in the cares and riches of the world. "As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands; he indeed bears fruit." (Matthew 13:18-23)

The church at 240 Leland Avenue was completed in 1923. The original design plan depicts a large generic window but there are no follow-up detailed drawings for it. We don't know any details, but the story that was passed along orally was that the stained glass in the church, including "The Sower" was liberated from a deserted church in a ghost town somewhere in Nevada.

"Campbell Glass and Paint Company" can be seen in the lower right-hand corner of the window. We are grateful to the Kansas City Main Library for the following information. This company had its inception in 1879 under the firm name of Campbell and Cutler, and was reorganized by Charles Campbell who founded the original business. It was big news in 1915 when the company moved into its new seven-story Campbell Building in Kansas City at Sixteenth and Walnut streets. In 1916 Campbell acquired the Platt & Thomhugh Paint Company of St. Louis, and this expansion made Kansas City "one of the first four cities in paint manufacturing in the country." Later still the Campbell Company was acquired by Clidden Glass and Paint Company. In the three lengthy articles about the company, there is no mention of stained or any other kind of glass.

But also supplied by the Kansas City library is the obituary for Thomas J. B. Pain, who died on March 1, 1936. Born in London on October 28, 1849, as a boy he ran errands for Charles Dickens and once watched Gustave Dore drawing caricatures of Queen Victoria while Dore was getting drunk in a London pub. Pain emigrated to Canada when he was 18 years old and moved to Kansas City in 1869.

He worked at Campbell Glass and Paint Company for over forty years, where he served as executive and as a designer of glass. After retiring in 1926 he continued his avocation of painting watercolors and had paintings of every Episcopal church in Kansas City. He served as senior warden at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, and he designed that church's windows. Perhaps he also designed the beautiful window of our own St. James Church.

Legislation Introduced to Limit Tobacco Sales Near Schools

Mayor Gavin Newsom on Jan. 26 introduced legislation at the Board of Supervisors that prohibits the issuance of new tobacco sales permits for businesses located within 1,000 feet of public and private schools in San Francisco.

"The research clearly shows kids start smoking and smoke more frequently when cigarette retailers are near schools," said Mayor Newsom. "About a third of the students in California purchase their tobacco within 1,000 feet of their schools, so we're looking to restrict this access in order to prevent children from smoking."

No permits to sell tobacco would be revoked as a consequence of this legislation, and retailers outside of the 1,000 foot zone are unaffected.

Permits would remain transferable to immediate family members, regardless of proximity to schools.

"I support the City's efforts to make it harder to buy cigarettes," said Superintendent Carlos Garcia. "The closer tobacco is to our schools, the more likely it is our students will buy it. We've made good progress educating our students and steering them away from smoking, and this legislation will help us push this important goal forward."

According to the City Attorney's Office, in San Francisco, 34.6 percent of youth say it is "easy" to purchase tobacco in their communities and the San Francisco Tobacco Free Project notes that 8 out of 10 smokers start smoking by the

age of 18. In addition, the costs of these smoking habits are real: In 1999, the California Department of Health Services found that the economic costs of smoking in California were approximately \$475 per resident or \$3,331 per smoker, for a total of nearly \$15.8 billion in smoking-related costs (1999 dollars). Those same costs in 2008 increased to \$614 per resident or \$4,310 per smoker for a total of nearly \$20.4 billion dollars.

"This targeted approach to preventing San Francisco's children from picking up this dangerous habit is good policy, both from a public health and an economic perspective," said Dr. Mitch Katz, the Director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

How to Earn a Higher Interest with a Checking Account

by Jason Alderman

People stash their money in safe havens such as savings accounts, Treasury Bills and Certificates of Deposit for a variety of reasons. It could be fear of losing money in the stock market, the security of knowing their deposits are government-insured or, with bank accounts at least, being able to quickly withdraw funds when needs arise.

In return for that convenience and security, however, interest earned usually doesn't keep pace with inflation.

When the economy was cooking a few years ago, 5 percent interest rates and higher on long-term CDs were not uncommon. But when the recession hit and the inflation rate began dropping, so did interest rates. These days, traditional savings accounts commonly earn just a fraction of 1 percent interest, while many CDs and T-Bills aren't much better.

So how can you earn more interest on insured savings these days? Would you believe a checking account?

Although checking accounts usually earn little or no interest, in the past few years a product called high-yield reward checking has gained in popularity. These accounts often pay much higher interest rates than regular checking or savings accounts—or even long-term CDs in the current market.

In addition to paying higher interest, financial institutions offering these accounts typically will refund each month a certain amount in transaction fees charged by other banks for using their ATMs. For smaller institutions, this helps make

up for not having their own extensive ATM network.

However, high-yield checking accounts usually come with restrictions that may include:

*A minimum number (usually 10-15) of monthly debit card purchases.

*Direct deposit (like a paycheck) and/or automatic debit transactions (e.g., monthly gym membership dues).

*Issuing electronic statements only.

*There may be a cap on account balances eligible for the high yield (commonly \$25,000 or less); over that cap, the rest may earn a much lower rate.

*Accounts may be limited to local customers only, although many are available nationally.

If you don't meet all requirements during a particular month, the in-

terest rate paid for that month could drop substantially, but typically will bounce back once you again meet all conditions.

Keep in mind a few other factors when considering a high-yield checking account:

*Interest rates are variable, so watch for notification of changes.

*Compare any fees side by side with those charged on your current account.

*Vigilantly track your balance to ensure it covers all debit card transactions; otherwise, overdraft charges could erase any interest earnings.

*Make sure the bank is a member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation so that up to \$250,000 per depositor, per institution will be insured. Search "Bank Find" at www.fdic.gov.

Visitacion Valley's Neighborhood Newspaper "The Grapevine" Mail Delivery 12 Issues for \$10

For more information Contact
The Grapevine Subscription Department

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...from the desk of the VVBOOM newsroom



by Nick Wolff

Your Neighborhood Pharmacy

When it comes to commercial institutions in Visitacion Valley, none is more storied than the Visitacion Valley Pharmacy at 100 Leland Avenue. With downtown Visitacion Valley undergoing tremendous changes via the Leland Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project, construction of a new branch li-

brary, and the redevelopment of the old Schlage Lock site, it is fascinating to step back and examine how much the community has changed. As the Visitacion Valley History Project (VVHP) reveals, the storefront has seen it all in the past 150 years. The following excerpt is taken from San Francisco's Visitacion Valley (Images of America Series) book, available locally at Joe Leland Coffee Shop, 28 Leland Avenue for the winter bargain price of \$15.00.

"In the mid-1860s the Rossi family settled in Visitacion Valley and established large vegetable gardens which they worked by hand. Virginio Rossi went on to own the Visitacion Valley Pharmacy on Leland Avenue until 1970, when his daughter took over. Oral historian Mary Leotta Schwartz recalled that when she was a young girl the 'library' was a single shelf unit about three feet wide and five or six shelves high, located in Jennings' store at Leland and Alpha, which later was Rossi's pharmacy. 'There were no cards or due dates,' she remembered. 'People simply borrowed books and returned them to the shelf.'"

Edie Epps remembers going to the pharmacy with her mother when she was a little girl. "The mezzanine above the store was hung with old photos of Visitacion Valley and some deer and elk heads. Behind the counter was a line of big jars filled with candy, root beer barrels, horehound drops, hot cinnamon drops and others and it was a great treat to pick out twenty-five cents' worth."

Today, Pharmacist Oliver Lee and his friendly, knowledgeable staff are dedicated to treating all customers as family. Aside from filling vital prescriptions, the Visitacion Valley Pharmacy offers an array of household health and beauty products including: vitamins, cosmetics, cough and cold medicine, band aids and cough drops just to name a few. They also have a large selection of greeting cards, stationery and they sell monthly SF Muni Monthly passes. Drop by, say hello and of course, shop local.

Birthday Wishes Are in Order

Casa Lopez, the fruit and produce market at 58 Leland Avenue celebrated their fifth Anniversary on Friday January 1, 2010. To show their appreciation for the community's support, they served up free hot dogs and hamburgers for all downtown Visitacion Valley shoppers from 12 noon to 3 p.m. In 2005, Casa Lopez was selected as an honorable mention for the inaugural San Francisco Neighborhood Business Award sponsored by the Examiner and Urban Solutions. Five years later, Casa Lopez continues to provide neighborhood residents access to organic produce and fresh meals in a warm, festive shopping environment. Casa Lopez remains a family-owned business operated by Trinidad and Refugio Lopez. Remember, local merchants are here to support the community. Make it a point to shop downtown Visitacion Valley in 2010.



SAFE - Lunar New Year

The 13th Annual Lunar New Year public safety press conference will kick off the 2010-Year of the Tiger celebrations on Tuesday, February 9th at 1:30 p.m. in downtown Visitacion Valley on Leland Avenue. With a precise location still to be determined, the event is being hosted by San Francisco Safety Awareness for Everyone (SF SAFE) in collaboration with San Francisco Chief of Police George

Gascon, along with Captain David Lazar (Ingleside) and Captain Greg Suhr (Bayview). The growth of the Leland Avenue Merchant Watch Group coupled with increased concern for safety on neighborhood bus lines has landed the annual press conference in Visitacion Valley. Thanks to strong partnerships with SF SAFE and SFPD, this year's press conference will focus on street crime prevention Muni safety.

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Joe Leland around the neighborhood

***Visitation Valley Ukulele Club:** Now forming in Visitation Valley and open to all levels, ages, and nationalities. This is a great opportunity to meet others in community and make beautiful music together. The first gathering will be on Saturday February 20, 2010 at the Visitation Valley Community Center 66 Raymond Ave SE, CA 94134. Spread the news! Please contact Neo Veavea at 415-519-6354 or nveavea@yahoo.com or Anne Seeman 415-467-8721 for more information.

***Ukulele: From Wikipedia.com:** The ukulele is commonly associated with music from Hawai'i where the name roughly translates as "jumping flea" due to the action of one's fingers playing the ukulele resembling a "jumping flea". According to Queen Lili'uokalani, the last Hawaiian monarch, the name means "the gift that came here", from the Hawaiian words uku (gift or reward) and lele (to come). Developed in the 1880s, the ukulele is based on a small guitar-like instrument, the machete introduced to the Hawaiian Islands by Macaronesian (Portuguese and Spanish) immigrants.

***Churches, Synagogue, Temples:** The re-imagining of Sunnydale and the redevelopment of the former Schlage Lock site continues to move forward. At last count the number of new homes from these developments stands at nearly 2,500. New parks and open space gathering places are part of the planning dialogue, but what about houses of worship? Historically neighborhoods, towns, and cities nucleated around civic buildings and houses of worship. Surely all the future new residents of Visitation Valley will not be godless.

***Shotspotter in Sunnydale?:** The gunfire location system may be on its way to Sunnydale in the very near future. ShotSpotter has already been deployed in the Bayview Hunters Point Area and can rapidly pinpoint the origin of gunfire to within 25 meters. Alerts will be automatically forwarded to the local police station and officers deployed according.

***Street Life: Meet the Artists:** Join the San Francisco Arts Commission and the artist team REBAR to learn more about the new sculpture that will be located at the corner of Leland Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard. WHEN: Monday, February 8, 2010, 6:30-7:30 p.m. WHERE: Joe Leland (coffee shop), 28 Leland Avenue, the artist team REBAR's designed the new public art project that will be installed as part of the Leland Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project. Scheduled for completion by early summer 2010, Street Life is a playful sculpture made from recycled parking meter heads attached to 18-foot arching steel poles. The cluster of parking meters was designed to appear as if it had grown to a whimsically tall height and is intended to remind the viewer of swaying grain or other organic forms. For more information about the Leland Avenue public art project contact Mary Chou at mary.chou@sfgov.org or at 415/252-3215. For more information about REBAR, visit www.rebargroup.org.

***Quote of the Month:** Tell me and I'll forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I'll understand. -Chinese proverb

***Bonus Quote of the Month:** A leader must have the courage to act against an expert's advice. -James Callaghan



Recology, the new name for garbage collection and recycling processing posted this new sign recently. Will they still be good neighbors?

Church of the Visitation

Roman Catholic (1907)

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Americans Weigh In on Hot-Button Topics

What keeps Americans up at night and what do they feel they can do about it?

You may be surprised at the answers from multiple polls taken by Parade magazine, which asked readers their opinions on various hot-button topics.

Talking Terror Rating

For example, a surprising number of Americans (76 percent) felt the nation's terror alert system did not make them feel safer. Those in favor of the system weighed in at 24 percent, citing a lack of incidents since its inception. The poll was taken in response to a magazine article exploring the history and future of the system, which may soon be overhauled.

Safety Measure or Privacy Invasion?

Another area of concern for many Americans is how to stop drunk drivers. Every year, about 13,000 Americans are killed by drunk drivers. Now, California and Wisconsin are considering new laws that would require people convicted of drunk driving to use a technology called an ignition interlock. Drivers blow into a device that measures blood-alcohol content, and if the level is too high, the car will not start. Is this a valid safety measure or an invasion of privacy? Parade's readers weighed in, with 93 percent overwhelmingly in favor of ignition locks. Only 7 percent said that they were opposed, citing the cost of such a device.

Pit Bulls

Are pit bulls an inherently dangerous breed or have they gotten a human rap? According to a Parade report,

dogs have killed at least 20 Americans so far this year, and in two out of three attacks, the killers were pit bulls. To combat the situation, some local governments have enacted "breed-specific" legislation that bans owning pit bulls. But animal-protection groups like The Humane Society of the U.S. say the problem lies with irresponsible owners, not their pets, and that U.S. cities where pit bulls are outlawed have not seen dramatic decreases in attacks. Parade asked readers if they think it should be illegal to own a pit bull. Seventy-six percent of readers said no; 24 percent disagreed with them.

Hot-Button Topics

Parade conducts such polls to take the pulse of readers on various hot-button topics. The magazine regularly explores relevant and controversial issues such as elder abuse, government subsidies of churches, and whether schools should have the right to strip-search students.

Readers were recently asked to weigh in on the subject of obesity. The leaders of many nations are trying to get their citizens to eat less. In Japan, health officials check the waistlines of citizens over 40, and those considered too fat must undergo diet counseling. Failure to slim down can lead to fines. New Zealand bars people it deems too heavy from immigrating to the country, and some British residents are rewarded for staying active. Does the U.S. need a government-backed effort to end obesity? Sixty-six percent said yes; 34 percent said no.

For more information, visit www.parade.com. **NAPS**

Tax Relief and Jobs for S.F. Businesses

Mayor Newsom on Jan. 26 spoke in support of the three job creation and retention measures described during his recent State of the City address and introduced to the Board of Supervisors. The measures are aimed at helping small and mid-sized businesses create and retain local jobs — an extension of our City's biotech tax credit, a payroll tax exemption for new hires, and tax incentives for small businesses that provide health care to their employees.

Mayor Newsom and Supervisor Michael Alioto-Pier have submitted these three business tax-lowering proposals to the Board's Budget and Finance Committee, as the first step to a full board vote. However, the Committee has refused to calendar the three job creation and job retention measures for a hearing.

"Although San Francisco's unemployment rate remains one of the lowest in the state, at 9.4 percent, it is still unacceptably high," said Mayor Newsom. "With tens of thousands of San Franciscans looking for work, we must put aside our ideological differ-

ences and do whatever it takes to grow our local economy and create jobs. I once again call on the Board of Supervisors to schedule hearings for these measures."

Mayor Newsom emphasized the critical need for a payroll tax exemption for new hires. The new Jobs Payroll Tax Exclusion would cap a business' payroll tax liability at 2009 level for two years. Therefore, any business that creates a job in 2010 or 2011 would not have to pay payroll tax on that hire until 2012. By eliminating the payroll tax on new jobs, the City will remove a disincentive to create a job in this down economy.

In support of the payroll tax exemption, Mayor Newsom was joined Patrick Connolly, CEO of Obscura Digital, a quickly growing technology firm based in SOMA. Obscura Digital currently has 40 employees and over 100 contractors. Connolly cited the potential of the payroll tax exemption as a means to weather the economic downturn, continue contributing to the economy, and an incentive to hire San Franciscans.

Book Review

Roulette Hanky Panky

Thomas Jackson had been performing locally in Niles, Michigan, in rock bands since the age of 12. Prompted to record a few songs by a local DJ in 1964, he chose an obscurity titled "Hanky Panky," which became a minor local hit that came and went.

Then, in 1966, the record was re-discovered by a Pittsburgh DJ who started playing it on heavy rotation, prompting a tremendous response. Soon, every record mogul in New York was pursuing Tommy James and the and the Shondells. But then every offer but one disappeared, and James found himself in the office of Morris Levy at Roulette Records, where he was handed a pen and ominously promised "one helluva ride." Morris Levy, the legendary "godfather" of the music business, needed a hit and "Hanky Panky" would be his. The song went to #1; James went on to do much more; and Levy continued to reign.

Me, the Mob, and the Music (Scribner, \$25) by Tommy James with Martin Fitzpatrick tells the intimate story of the complex and sometimes terrifying relationship between the bright-eyed, sweet-faced blonde musician from the heartland and the big, bombastic, brutal hully from the Bronx, who hustled, cheated and swindled his way to the top of the music industry. It is also the story of this swaggering, wildly creative era of rock n' roll when the hits kept coming and payola and the strong arm tactics of the mob were the norm, and what it was like, for better or worse, to be in the middle of it.

Cooking Corner

Wonton Soup

¼ pound lean ground pork, 2 ounces medium raw shrimp, peeled, deveined and minced, 2 tablespoons minced green onions and tops; 4 teaspoons Kikkoman Soy Sauce, divided; ½ teaspoon cornstarch, ¼ teaspoon grated fresh ginger; 24 wonton wrappers; 3 (14-ounce) cans chicken broth; ¼ cup dry sherry; ½ pound bok choy; 2 tablespoons chopped green onions and tops; ½ teaspoon Asian sesame oil.

Combine pork, shrimp, minced green onions, 2 teaspoons soy sauce, cornstarch and ginger in medium bowl; mix well.

Arrange several wonton wrappers on clean surface; cover remaining wrappers to prevent drying out.

Place 1 teaspoon pork mixture in center of each wrapper. Fold wrapper over filling to form a triangle.

Gently fold center point down and moisten left corner with water.

Twist and overlap opposite corner over moistened corner; press firmly to seal. Repeat with remaining pork mixture and wrappers.

Bring 4 cups water to boil in large saucepan. Add wontons. Simmer 3 minutes; remove with slotted spoon.

Discard water; pour broth and sherry into same saucepan. Cut bok choy crosswise into ½-inch slices, separating stems from leaves.

Add stems to broth mixture; bring to boil. Add wontons; simmer 1 minute. Add bok choy leaves and chopped green onions; simmer 1 minute longer.

Remove from heat; stir in remaining 2 teaspoons soy sauce and sesame oil. Serve immediately. Makes 6 servings. **NAPS**

Grapevine on the Web

Read current and past stories from the Visitation Valley Grapevine at www.visvalleygrapevine.com

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EarthTalk

Television Still Harmful?

Dear EarthTalk: Years ago I read that children should be kept at least two feet from the television because of harmful electronic emissions. Is this still relevant? Is there a difference regarding this between older and new flat-screen models? -Ilorst E. Mehning, Oconomowoc, WI

Luckily for many of us and our kids, sitting "too" close to the TV isn't known to cause any human health issues. This myth prevails because back in the 1960s General Electric sold some new-fangled color TV sets that emitted excessive amounts of radiation—as much as 100,000 times more than federal health officials considered safe. GE quickly recalled and repaired the faulty TVs, but the stigma lingers to this day.

But even though electronic emissions aren't an issue with TVs made any time after 1968 (including today's LCD and plasma flat screens), what about causing harm to one's vision? Dr. Lee Duffner of the American Academy of Ophthalmology isn't concerned, maintaining that watching television screens—close-up or otherwise—"won't cause any physical damage to your eyes." He adds, however, that a lot of TV watching can surely cause eye strain and fatigue, particularly for those sitting very close and/or watching from odd angles. But there is an easy cure for eye strain and fatigue: turning off the TV and getting some rest. With a good night's sleep, tired eyes should quickly return to normal.

Debra Ronca, a contributor to the How Stuff Works website, argues that some parents might be putting the cart before the horse in blaming close-up TV watching for their child's vision issues. "Sitting close to the television may not make a child nearsighted, but a child may sit close to the television because he or she is nearsighted and undiagnosed," she reports. "If your child habitually sits too close to the television for comfort, get his or her eyes tested."

Of course, excessive TV viewing by kids can cause health problems indirectly. According to the Nemours Foundation's Kids! health website, children who consistently watch TV more than four hours a day are more likely to be overweight, which in and of itself can bring about health problems later. Also, kids who watch a lot of TV are more likely to copy bad behavior they see on-screen and tend to "fear that the world is scary and that something bad will happen to them." Nemours also finds that TV characters often depict risky behaviors (like smoking and drinking) and also tend to reinforce gender-role and racial stereotypes.

There has also been much debate

in recent years on the effects of TV viewing on infants. A 2007 Seattle Children's Research Institute study found that for every hour per day infants spent watching baby DVDs and videos they learned six to eight fewer new vocabulary words than babies who never watched the videos. But a 2009 study by the Center on Media & Child Health at Children's Hospital Boston found no negative cognitive or other impacts whatsoever on those infants exposed to more television than less.

While it may be inevitable that your kids will watch TV, the key, experts say, is moderation. Limit kids' exposure to screens of any kind, and monitor what they are allowed to watch. As KidsHealth points out, parents should teach their kids that the TV is "for occasional entertainment, not for constant escapism."

Dear EarthTalk: What's better for the local ecology, sewers or septic tanks? -T.H., Darien, CT

You probably won't have much choice as to whether that home you're thinking of buying is on sewer or septic. Most likely it's a done deal, unless the neighborhood is presently all on septic but is considering a petition to the town to switch to sewers (in which case you can usually agree to hook up or stay put).

There are pros and cons to each in regard to the environment. Both types of systems are designed to handle and treat so-called "blackwater" (wastewater from toilets) and "graywater" coming from our sinks, showers, dishwashers and laundry machines. On-site septic and community-wide sewer systems work in

similar ways, utilizing micro-organisms to filter out bacteria, viruses and other disease-causing pathogens before releasing the cleansed water back into the environment.

In general, most people prefer to be on a shared sewer system if they have a choice, as the burden of keeping the system running smoothly falls on the local government, which presumably has the money and expertise to ensure that wastewater is properly treated across the region. Also, in a shared sewer system, wastewater is whisked away to a centralized treatment facility; anyone who has ever experienced a septic system backup on their property can appreciate what a benefit off-site wastewater treatment can be.

Another advantage to a shared sewer is that such systems are usually built to withstand heavy loads and can better accommodate periods of heavy precipitation or storm surges that might overwhelm smaller, poorly conceived or maintained home-based septic tanks, which are by virtue of their size and the laws of physics more prone to overflow and send contaminants into nearby surface and ground waters.

Septic systems have their proponents, though, who say that a professionally designed, installed and maintained system should hold up in even the biggest of storms. The University of Minnesota Extension (UMNE), which publishes the useful online "Septic System Owner's Guide," says vigilance is key: "The only way to guarantee effective treatment is to have a trained professional

ensure adequate unsaturated and suitable soil exists below the soil treatment area to allow for complete wastewater treatment."

When homeowners don't take care of their septic systems properly, though, they can become a nuisance for the surrounding ecosystem. Wastewater that is not properly treated can contaminate surface and groundwater and threaten public health. According to UMNE, improperly treated sewage can be the culprit behind the spread of hepatitis, dysentery and other diseases resulting from pathogens in drinking water, while also compromising the purity of lakes and streams. Addi-

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tionally, flies and mosquitoes that are attracted to and breed in wet areas where sewage reaches the surface can also spread disease. Improperly treated sewage can also lead to increased nitrates in local water supplies, which is dangerous for infants, pregnant women and those with already compromised immune systems. In and around lakes and streams, this influx in nitrates can lead to plant growth out of whack with the local ecosystem's ability to handle it, resulting in oxygen-free "dead zones" devoid of marine and riparian life altogether.

Saturdays are Special at Randall Museum

The Randall Museum offers drop-in, hands-on art and science workshops every Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. at 199 Museum Way (off Roosevelt, above the Castro). Workshops are \$3 per child; \$5 for a parent and child combo. All kids under 8 must be with a paying adult. Call 554-9600 for further information.

*Feb. 6: Make a magnificent Chinese lion head puppet to celebrate the upcoming Lunar New Year.

*Feb. 13: Make a sparkly, one-of-a-kind pop-up Valentine's Day Card to give to the one you love.

*Feb. 20: Turn 2D into 3D, fold, assemble and decorate an origami box.

*Feb. 27: Bring a small photo or other 2D memento or use one at the museum and choose from our collection of glitter, sequins, feathers and more to embellish your own refrigerator magnet.

Other regular Saturday activities

include:

*Morning Family Ceramics from 10 to 11:30 a.m. (\$5 per person workshop fee)

*Meet the Animals from 11:15 a.m. to 12 noon.

*Animal Feeding at 12 noon.

*Golden Gate Model Railroad Club Exhibit from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Senior Bingo and Tiny Tots Classes at Sutter Playground

Louis Sutter Playground located at the northeast corner of McLaren Park at 1199 Wayland St. has a Tiny Tots class and weekly Senior Bingo.

Tiny Tots is held Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, while Senior Bingo is on Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

For more information, call Diane, the director at (415) 584-6106.

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Grapevine Classified

VVCC BOARD MEETINGS: Visitacion Valley Community Center (VVCC) regular monthly Board meetings, held the 4th Thursday of each month at 6 p.m., except December and May, are open to the public. Board members are selected by the members of the community center with dues currently paid, at the Annual Membership meeting held the 3rd Saturday in May each year. Any vacancies that occur on the Board due to uncompleted 3-year terms of membership are filled by appointment of the remaining Board members. At least 75 percent of our Board members must reside in Visitacion Valley. Persons interested in Board membership are encouraged to send a letter of interest to Board of Directors Development Committee, Visitacion Valley Community Center, 50 Raymond Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94134. Please let the Board know what you could contribute that will enhance and improve our organization for better service to our community. You will be contacted and your letter will be submitted to the Board for consideration at either the next Annual election or of any available open positions that might occur within the coming year.

GRAPEVINE DISPLAY ADVERTISING: new limited-time rates. Full Page \$60, 1/2 Page \$33.75, 1/4 Page \$18.75, 1/8 Page \$10, 1/12 Page \$8, 1/16 Page \$6. Generous discount for three or more insertions. Call (415) 467-9300 for more details. **Classified:** 20 words for \$1. Extra line 50 cents. Ad and payment should be received by 15th of prior month at Visitacion Valley Grapevine, 50 Raymond Ave., San Francisco, CA 94134.

Home Weatherproofing Aid for Low-Income Families

by Jason Alderman

If you're plagued by winter drafts and high heating bills but can't afford to weatherproof your home, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) just might be able to help.

Since 1976, WAP has helped protect more than 6 million low-income households from summer's heat and winter's cold, significantly lowering both individual utility bills and overall national energy usage.

And thanks to a dramatic \$5 billion infusion from last year's American Recovery and Investment Act, WAP is on target to weatherize – for free – an additional 1 million households a year.

Here's how WAP works.

Each year, Congress appropriates funding to the DOE to administer the program. DOE then provides WAP funding and technical guidance to individual states, U.S. territories and Indian tribes, which in turn fund local agencies to install energy conservation materials and make repairs in qualified low-income homes.

The 2009 Recovery Act increased the average household expenditure limit from \$2,500 to \$6,500. It also expanded WAP eligibility to include anyone whose income is at or below 200 percent

of the poverty level for their household size. Each state sets its own program rules, however, so many have more generous eligibility criteria.

WAP provides energy-efficiency services that are tailored to each home, whether a single- or multi-family dwelling or mobile home. Homeowners and renters can apply, although renters must obtain written permission from their landlords.

As many as 30 million families are eligible for WAP. Those receiving Supplemental Security Income or Aid to Families with Dependent Children are automatically eligible.

In other cases, preference is usually given to people over age 60, families with one or more disabled members and families with children.

To see if you are eligible for WAP, visit www.eere.energy.gov/weatherization, which contains application instructions, contact information for individual state programs and local weatherization service providers, frequently asked questions, and a step-by-step description of how the process works.

As part of the application process you will be asked to provide proof of income and other qualifying information. If accepted, you will receive a professional energy consultation by the

agency. They will conduct a home energy audit during which they will likely:

- *Analyze your utility bills
- *Test infiltration of outside air into your home
- *Inspect your home and equipment for safety
- *Determine the most cost-effective energy conservation measures for your home.

Depending on what they find, the agency will then conduct needed repairs and equipment installation, which might include: installing wall, floor and attic insulation; sealing and repairing ducts; reducing air infiltration and pressure imbalances; and tuning, repairing or replacing heating and cooling systems, as needed.

You also will receive tips on ways to further reduce your utility bills on an ongoing basis.

Even if you aren't eligible for WAP, you may qualify for short-term utility bill assistance through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and administered by individual states.

To learn more, visit www.act.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap.

Don't let personal income challenges stand in the way of weatherproofing your home or paying your heating bill this winter.

Organize All of Your Paperwork Before Doing Taxes

Tax time won't be half as taxing if you organize your paperwork throughout the year. Even if you hire someone to do your taxes, having your papers in order can help speed the process. Here are just a few of the types of papers that may affect your tax return:

*Bills, mortgage payment records and other paperwork to support deductions

- *Credit card and other receipts
- *Invoices
- *Mileage records
- *Checks
- *Previous year's tax return (possibly more).

Dome Simplified Bookkeeping Records are a helpful way for small businesses to keep cash records and jot down income and expenses.

Keep papers in a central place.

Dome Tax Deductions File is an easy-to-use record of all personal tax-deductible expenses. This file can simplify the filing of federal and state tax returns and it has pockets for storing important papers.

If you haven't been keeping tax papers in one place, now is a good time to start. To learn more, visit an office supply store or go to www.domeproducts.com. **NAPS**

McLaren Park News and Notes Park Planning Process in Progress

by Betty Parshall

By the time this column comes out in the February Grapevine, the first of three community meetings heralded as "the McLaren Park Needs Assessment & Action Plan Workshops" will have taken place. The purpose of the workshops is to gather thoughts and ideas from everyone on the top priorities for improvements to the park that is to result in an action plan that will have practical and measurable goals.

Tina Kim, an intern with the Recreation and Parks Department, has advised that there is a grant application will be made improve park features, and that community help is solicited to choose what project should benefit from the money.

Karen Mauney-Brodek is a planner working for the Department and started gathering information from park users in early January and walking through the park to become acquainted with its many features. I was able to join one of her walks with a few others and we pointed out situations that many park users have previously urged the Department to improve. Karen explained that she will spend some months gathering information and then spend a few more months preparing a list of recommendations and possible means to accomplish projects along with priorities to be assigned.

While I appreciate the efforts being made to develop such a plan, I must confess to a sense of déjà vu.

(See Visitation Valley History column, Grapevine, September 2009.) However, I hope that these workshops will have dozens or even hundreds of participants from all the neighborhoods surrounding the park. People often complain that McLaren Park does not get anything like the attention given to Golden Gate Park. It is vital that our neighborhoods turn out and make our voices heard. Good, hard-working individuals and groups have been volunteering time and energy to bring amenities to the park. Now is the time for a lot more folks to get involved in giving the Department the information it solicits.

An interesting phenomenon has occurred since these workshops were first scheduled. While the notices from the Department suggest a broad range of issues that can be addressed some folks are posting flyers in the park and on neighborhood electronic message boards suggesting that the meetings are to address the question of disc golf in the park. This is certainly a legitimate issue to bring to the workshops, but not the only one. Plan to attend, there are sure to be some lively discussions.

Mark your calendars. You are urged to attend both meetings if possible, large attendance tells the Recreation and Parks Department that our communities have strong feelings about the park and its use.

Tuesday, March 23 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Crocker Amazon Playground Clubhouse

Tuesday, May 25, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Louis Sutter Playground Roundhouse

For additional information you can contact Tina Kim or Karen Mauney-Brodek at 415-831-2789 or email Karen.Mauney-Brodek@stgov.org

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World's Biggest Cities 3

A D A C X D G Y U I A I R D N A X E L A

V C R T T F X H I U D G F S A F G F H N

F X A F D S G A N M D I S R E W F M G K

D Z J S S E S N I O M E R W Q E E A Y A

S Z A E A E R A I I T T R D S D R N G R

D F L W W R M W L J Q S A S A S O O U A

C Y A U S I D A S L N X U B F M P L G P

D U D D A Y N T B E A A A O D U A E F B

N Y A G A A W L D I Z D N S H O G C F C

O G U N E D S A D D D Z G T S T N R C X

T F G E R H Z N E S Z J N O F R I A X Z

G O X H T S Z T E T R X A N D A S B Z M

N V Z C R S R A S F I K Y N S H A F L N

I B B E L O H O R I Z O N T E K S D K V

H V V S I D A D R Y U R E E A A E X N S

S R R T S G N I Q G N O H C A S D Z B E

A X E E E D R Y G D S D S U U G F D V D

W Z R W A Z S E W Q E T E A E R D F D C

R D B G R U B S R E T E P T N I A S V I

F G H Z E T Y U I O P K H G U I O I H G

Historic Proportions

1852

Match clues to answers.

1. First American experimental steam vehicle was tested on Mar. 2.

2. United Kingdom recognized independence on Jan. 17.

3. French engineer made first airship trip on Sept. 24 from Paris to Trappes.

4. Archibald William Montgomery

As a Matter of Fact

*In a wedding ceremony, usually the maid of honor carries the same bouquet as the bridesmaids.

*Luther Burbank introduced 69 new kinds of fruit, including stoneless cherries and white blackberries.

*Venezuela's Angel Falls is a mile high.

*Beethoven was totally deaf when he composed his Ninth Symphony.

*In Greek mythology, the muse Polymnia presided over hymns, pantomime and religious dance; terpsichore over choral dancing and singing.

*The Lincoln penny is the only U.S. circulating coin currently produced in which the portrait faces to the right.

*Salted-in-the-shell peanuts are soaked in brine to get the salt flavor before they are roasted.

*The first license to broadcast regularly went to station WBZ in Springfield, Massachusetts.

*The substance which resembles human blood most closely is sea water.

*To be classified as brilliant, a diamond is cut so as to have 58 facets.

*Sequoia National Park is named for the Cherokee Indian who invented a system of writing.

*Bathing suits known as bikinis take their name from an atoll in the Marshall Islands where the atomic bomb was tested.

*In 1893, Queen Isabella of Spain became the first woman to be featured on a U.S. commemorative coin.

Grapevine Five Years Ago

FEBRUARY 2005

*At a meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Sophie Maxwell of District 10 made a hearing request before the Land Use Committee on the potential adoption of a Redevelopment Agency Survey Area for the Visitation Valley Plan Area.

Answers: 1-E; 2-H; 3-B; 4-I; 5-D; 6-A; 7-C; 8-C; 9-F

Sump, the Grump

Touch Down

Poof T

What a Game!

New Process to Review Market Value of Property

Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting on Jan. 13 announced a new process what will allow homeowners to request a review of the market value of their property.

The Office of the Assessor-Recorder is accepting for the 2010-2011 tax year through March 31, 2010. Homeowners will be notified of the results of their informal review in the annual Notice of Assessed Value which will be mailed at the end of July 2010.

"Last year we had a record number of informal review applications," Ting said. "In response to this huge demand, we are accepting applications through March 31, 2010 so that the homeowners will be informed of their informal review requests in the annual Notice of Assessed Value mailed in July 2010."

The Office of the Assessor-Recorder will automatically review the market value of property for the year 2010-11 that already received a temporary reduction.

Homeowners who received a temporary reduction for year 2009-10 either by an informal review or a decision made by the Assessment Appeals Board do not need to submit an informal review request.

For property tax year 2010-11, the Office of the Assessor-Recorder will accept informal review requests for single family dwellings, residential condominiums, townhouses, live-work units, and residential cooperative units.

A request for an informal review can be made in writing by completing an application or submitting a request online at www.sfgov.org/assessor. Applications are also available for property owners in Chinese and Spanish.

"This new informal review process is free and will make it as easy as possible for taxpayers to qualify for a reduction if it is warranted," said Ting. "In 2009, approximately 11,700 homeowners received temporary reductions and each will automatically receive a review of their property for the year 2010-11."

In 2007-08, the Office of the Assessor-Recorder received approximately 245 informal review requests. In 2009-10, there were approximately 4,400 informal review requests, marking a 1650 percent growth of informal reviews received.

Residential property owners are also encouraged to file a formal appeal with the Assessment Appeals Board between July 2 and September 15, 2010.

Visitation Valley Business Directory

Valley free listings in the 415 area code

Call the Grapevine at (415) 467-9300

AQUARIUM

DRAGON CITY AQUARIUM, 144 Leland Ave., 333-4598

AUTOMOTIVE

BAYSHORE AUTO, 2260 Bayshore Blvd., 467-6130

BAYSHORE SERVICE, 2596 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5239

BROTHERS AUTO BODY, 2520 Bayshore Blvd., 239-7450

CHARLIE'S GARAGE, 2560 Bayshore Blvd., 239-7450

TIGER SAUTO BODY, 23 Industrial Way, Brisbane 94006, 467-6866

TW AUTOMOTIVE, 2500 Bayshore Blvd., 585-8281

BANK

BANK OF AMERICA, 6 Leland Ave., 622-4501

BAKERS

LITTLE QUIAPO BAKE SHOP, 169 Leland Ave., 239-2253

BARBERS

BARBERSHOP, 3570 San Bruno Ave., 724-4398

EMMA'S HAIR SALON, 35 Leland Ave., 587-7429

THE SHOP (JB), 160A Leland Ave., 239-6709

BEAUTICIANS

AS YOU R, 170 Leland Ave., 756-1450

BODY, SOUL & SPIRIT, 222 Leland Ave., 333-7261

CONNIE'S HAIR, 2436 Bayshore Blvd., 586-8288

HONG KONG HAIR & NAIL BEAUTY SALON, 199 Leland Ave., 333-1005

HAIR BY JENNY, 50 Leland Ave., 333-6800

SHERRY BEAUTY SALON, 60 Leland Ave., 337-9381

BLIND CLEANING

SPEEDY ULTRASONIC BLIND CLEANING (commercial and residential), 1116 Grand St., 467-7506

BOARDING HOUSE

ABLE'S CASA, 850 Rutland St., 333-4664, fax 333-4693

BOOKKEEPERS

AMY ARAGON - PROFESSIONAL BOOKKEEPER, 467-8927

VERNA WALLACE E.A., 2320 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5333

CARPETS

HANSAN INTERIORS, 41 Leland Ave., 333-6382

CHURCHES

CHURCH OF THE VISITACION, 655 Sunnydale Ave., 494-5517, fax 494-5513

IGLESIA EL ESPIRITU SANTO, 38 Leland Ave.

KOREAN FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 333 Tunnel Ave., 468-1213

RIDGE VIEW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 590 Leland Ave., 239-5457

ST. JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 240 Leland Ave., 586-6381

VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH, 306 Raymond Ave., 467-6055

VISITACION CHINESE BAPTIST CHURCH, 8 Desmond St., 333-4503

COFFEE

CANDLESTICK COFFEE, 2155 Bayshore Blvd., 467-2442

HAPPY DONUT, 2600 Bayshore Blvd., 469-5309

JOE LELAND CAFE, 28 Leland Ave.

CREDIT UNION

NORTHEAST COMMUNITY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, 29 Leland Ave., 434-0738

DAY CARE

CAROUSEL DAY CARE, 261 Hahn St., 469-5353

STARBRITE DAYCARE, 298 Arleta Ave., 656-1887

DENTIST

VISITACION VALLEY DENTAL OFFICE (Albert Kwan, DDS), 37 Leland Ave., 239-5500

DEVELOPERS

VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, 1099 Sunnydale Ave., 587-7895

ELECTRICAL

TATE ELECTRIC (Joel Tate), 467-4657

FLOORS

TEDDY B'S HARDWOOD FLOORS, 309-6342

FLORISTS

IL FIORE FLOWERS, 2466 San Bruno Ave., 468-0145

FURNITURE REFINISHING / HANDYMAN

AMAZING MAYS HANDYMAN SERVICE AND FURNITURE REFINISHING, 6220 3rd St., 468-3129

GARDEN ORNAMENTS

SILVESTRI GARDEN ORNAMENTS, 2635 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5990

GROCERS

CASALLOPEZ PRODUCE, 58 Leland Ave., 586-4745

E-Z STOP MARKET, 2203 Geneva Ave., 585-9240

LA LOMA PRODUCE #2, 65 Leland Ave., 239-7520

LITTLE VILLAGE MARKET, 1450 Sunnydale Ave., 586-1815

M & M SHORTSTOP, 2145 Geneva Ave., 585-0878

PICCOLO PETE, 2155 Bayshore Blvd., 468-6800

7-11, 2200 Bayshore Blvd., 468-8646

SHUN LEE MARKET, 2400 Bayshore Blvd., 586-4851

TEO'S MARKET, 298 Teddy Ave.

HERBS

SAN ON HERBS, 33-A Leland Ave., 333-7469

HYPNOTHERAPY

VALERIE HABEGGER-HYPNOTHERAPY, 371 Teddy Ave., 468-5631

INSURANCE

EDIE EPPS (A H E INSURANCE), 467-0236, Fax 467-0276

ROBERT LEHMAN CLTC (Blue Cross), 333-0850

KITCHEN CABINETS

LEE CHANG INTERNATIONAL, 25 Leland Ave., 333-2730

LANDSCAPING

SAN FRANCISCO LANDSCAPES (Lic. #932022), 256 Talbert St., 585-9137, slandscapes.com

LAUNDRY/CLEANERS

BAY WASH, 44 Leland Ave.

QTY WASH, 83 Leland Ave., 333-9457

COIN WASH & DRY LAUNDRY, 186 Leland Ave.

FORTY-NINER CLEANERS, 51 Leland Ave., 239-6418

LELANO AVENUE CLEANERS, 151 Leland Ave., 586-1412

VALLEY LAUNDRY, 90 Leland Ave.

VISITACION VALLEY LAUNDRY, 108 Leland Ave., 239-9030

LEARNING

FIRST PLACE 2 START, 1252 Sunnydale Ave., 333-2669

HERITAGE HOMES CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER, 245 Rey St., 586-8700

JOHN KING CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER, 500 Raymond Ave., 333-1375

VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY BEACON CENTER, 450 Raymond Ave., 452-4907

VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER CHILDRENS PROGRAMS, 103 Tucker Ave., 467-5565

VISITACION VALLEY FAMILY SCHOOL, 325 Leland Ave., 585-9320

LIBRARY

VISITACION VALLEY BRANCH, 45 Leland Ave., 239-5270

MANUFACTURER

SEE'S CANDIES, INC., 345 Schwenn St.

MEDICAL

AMERICAN RED CROSS, BAY AREA CHAPTER, 1704 Sunnydale Ave., 584-3620

HAWKINS VILLAGE MEDICAL CLINIC (Dept. of Public Health), 1099 Sunnydale Ave., Appointments: 715-0310

DR. SAM HO, MD, 2858 San Bruno Ave., 337-6135

NEW CARNIVAL ACUPRESSURE HEALTH CENTER, 2458 Bayshore Blvd., 337-8100

NORTH EAST MEDICAL SERVICES, LELAND AVENUE, 82 Leland Ave., 391-9686 (ask for Leland Avenue clinic)

PORTOLA FOOT & ANKLE CLINIC (Dr. Dhyan Patel), 2858 San Bruno Ave., 467-7500

ORGANIZATIONS

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER, 2442 Bayshore Blvd., 587-2689

WILLIE L. BROWN JR. TEEN CENTER, 1652 Sunnydale Ave., 584-6099

CHINESE FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN VISITACION VALLEY, 1099 Sunnydale Ave., 597-5779

GENEVA TERRACE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION, 60 Burr Ave., 584-2700

GIRLS AFTER SCHOOL ACADEMY, 2050 Sunnydale Ave., 333 Schwenn St., 584-4044

JOHN KING SENIOR COMMUNITY, 500 Raymond Ave., 239-6233

LELANO HOUSE, 141 Leland Ave., 405-2000

ROCK (Real Options for City Kids), 590 Leland Ave., 333-4001

SUNNYDALE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB, 1654 Sunnydale Ave., 584-5028

SUNNYDALE DEVELOPMENT COO OFFICE, 1652 Sunnydale Ave., 841-1683

VISITACION VALLEY SENIOR CENTER, 66 Raymond Ave., 467-4499

PHARMACY

VISITACION VALLEY PHARMACY, 100 Leland Ave., 239-5811

PHOTOGRAPHER

WALTER CORBIN PHOTOGRAPHY (freelance), 435 Sawyer St., 587-9471, fax 337-8620

PLUMBING

MARK VOELKER PLUMBING, 99 Arleta Ave., 467-7401

POST OFFICE

VISITACION USPO, 68 Leland Ave. (800) 275-8777

REAL ESTATE

JUSTYNA TO, (Realtor, Coldwell Banker), 836-1235

LA FLUE WALTON & ASSOCIATES, 2428 Bayshore Blvd., 587-8683

ROYAL PACIFIC MORTGAGE, 46 Leland Ave., 333-4900

CATHY KLINE SAUNDERS (Zephyr Real Estate), 215 West Portal Ave., 731-5011 ex. 163

RESTAURANTS

BAYSIDE CAFE, 2011 Bayshore Blvd., 467-2023

HAPPY FAMILY FAST FOOD, 107 Leland Ave., 333-8999

G & L BAKERY & RESTAURANT, 198 Leland Ave., 239-6283

LUAN FAT BAKERY, 110 Leland Ave., 585-1167

NAYANT TAQUERIA, 98 Leland Ave., 587-7721

TWO JACKS, 167 Leland Ave., 337-0433

SCULPTOR

CARTORIALS (Mikal Cartor), 2 Hahn St., 239-4138

SELF-DEVELOPMENT

OYNAMIC DEVELOPMENTS (Marjorie Ann Williams, CEO, Career and Self-Enhancements Specialist), 467-7608

SERVICE PROVIDERS

CLAIR PROJECT, 1099 Sunnydale Ave., Ste. 323, 333-3017, fax 587-7481

THE VILLAGE, 1099 Sunnydale Ave., 239-5045

VISITACION VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH OUTREACH CENTER, 57 Leland Ave.

VISITACION VALLEY BILINGUAL EDUCATION SUPPORTIVE SERVICES & TRAINING, 120 Leland Ave.

VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER (VVCC), 50 Raymond Ave., 467-6400

VVCC FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER, 161 Leland Ave., 586-6998, Fax 586-8027

VISITACION VALLEY BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTREACH TO MERCHANTS, 225 5969

TELEPHONE

D & A WIRELESS, 78 Leland Ave., 452-4139

VARIETY

GOLDEN 99 CENTS ZONE, 57 Leland Ave., 333-3923

Events in February at Valley Branch Library

Following are events in February at the Visitation Valley Branch Library, 45 Leland Ave.

*Feb. 3, Wednesday: Manga and Cartoon Art Workshop - Comicbook artist Oliver Chin will teach you how to draw your own comics from 4 to 6 p.m. Get tips from a pro and get ready to submit your work to the Teen Manga/Cartoon Art Contest benefiting the Visitation Valley Branch Capital Campaign. Space is in this workshop is limited, so please sign up in advance! For teens, ages 12-18. For more information or to register, contact Abby at (415) 355-2848 or aharwood@sfppl.org.

*Feb. 25, Thursday: Friendship Bracelets - Show a friend or loved on you care with a handmade friendship bracelet from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Learn the basics at this workshop for teens. All materials provided. For ages 12-18. For more information or to register, contact Abby at (415) 355-2848 or aharwood@sfppl.org.

New Brotherhood of Men Support Group

The Metropolitan Fresh Start House is presenting The Brotherhood of Men, a men's support group and substance abuse classes every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1 to 2:30 p.m. beginning February 2 at 316 Leland Ave.

The Metropolitan Fresh Start House is committed to restoring in men their ability to dream, and see themselves as responsible leaders of family and community. These sessions help empower men for recovery, restoration, rehabilitation, dignity and personal pride. For more information, please contact Sam DeVore, Program Coordinator at (415) 724-0791.

Low Inflation Leaves Tax Deductions Mostly Unchanged

by Jason Alderman

When it comes to inflation, 2009 was a good news/bad news kind of year – with a few mixed messages thrown in for good measure.

According to one widely used inflation measurement, the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index for urban consumers (CPI-U), the rate of inflation actually fell for the quarter ending September 30, 2009, compared to the same period a year earlier. (Remember, gasoline prices, which spiked during 2008 and impacted numerous other expenses, subsided considerably in 2009.)

Those whose bills have continued to rise probably would debate whether it was actually cheaper to live in 2009 than in 2008. Regardless, this is an important statistic because the IRS uses the third-quarter CPI-U to determine whether dozens of tax-related numbers such as income tax bracket limits and maximum retirement savings plan contributions will stay the same or increase in the following tax year.

The good news is that although many savers feared that retirement plan contribution limits might actually drop for the first time ever, the IRS determined that provisions in the Social Security Act prohibit such reductions. The bad news, for those who would have liked to increase such contributions next year, is that they cannot do so.

Even worse, because inflation was so low, for the first time in decades, Social Security beneficiaries will not receive a cost-of-living benefit increase in 2010, even though Medicare Part D (prescription drug coverage) premiums are expected to rise.

On the mixed news front, the IRS left unchanged most tax deductions that are subject to an-

nual inflation adjustments, although a few did creep up slightly. Here's a summary of some common tax benchmarks:

*Federal personal tax exemptions remain constant at \$3,650 per individual.

*The standard tax deduction for heads of households increases by just \$50 to \$8,400. It remains unchanged at \$11,400 for married couples filing jointly and \$5,700 for singles and those who are married but file separately.

*Various tax bracket thresholds will increase slightly – for example, the threshold between the 15 percent and 25 percent tax brackets for married couples filing jointly increases by \$100 to \$68,000.

*The annual gift tax exclusion remains unchanged at \$13,000.

*The Social Security taxable wage base (upper income limit subject to Social Security taxes) remains unchanged at \$106,800.

*The maximum annual contri-

bution to 401(k), 403(h) and 457 plans remains unchanged at \$16,500 (plus an additional \$5,500 for those over age 50). The annual limit for combined employee and employer contributions to such plans remains at \$49,000.

*The maximum contribution to a regular or Roth IRA remains unchanged at \$5,000 (those aged 50 and older can contribute an additional \$1,000).

*Married couples filing jointly will see the amount they can contribute to a Roth IRA gradually phased out if their adjusted gross income exceeds \$167,000 – a \$1,000 increase over 2009's level; the phase-out limitation floor for others remains unchanged at \$105,000.

*Check www.irs.gov for other 2010 tax changes.

Bottom line: In 2010, inflation pays a very minor role in terms of tax threshold changes compared to previous years.

Helpful Tips on Giving a Phone as a Gift

When you're thinking of giving the gift of a phone, it's wise to reflect on the individual's lifestyle and select a phone that matches.

Consider these personality types and telephones:

The World Traveler: Verizon Escapade is a versatile phone that provides calling capability from 220 destinations worldwide.

It's terrific for the businessperson or leisure traveler.

The Savvy Student or Aspiring Professional: T-Mobile Tap offers 3G speed for accessing the Internet, texting, instant messaging and personal e-mail.

The Music Lover: Verizon Razzle boasts expandable storage, full keypad and cool swivel design to maximize music enjoyment.

The Texting Teen or Social

Networker: T-Mobile Sidekick provides texting with instant access to Twitter, Facebook and MySpace. With a large flip screen and full keypad, it has lots of features to stay in touch.

When you give a phone that fits the person's lifestyle, explains Philip Christopher, president of Personal Communications Devices (PCD), it's likely to be a hit. For more information, visit www.pcdphones.com. **NAPS**

Free Saturday Class at Garden for the Environment

Composting Winter can be a great time to start a new compost pile or to jump start one that just isn't breaking down. Join Garden For the Environment (7th Avenue at Lawton Street for a fun, free hands-on workshop from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturday, Feb. 6 teaching basic methods of both

First-Time Homebuyer Tax Credit Expanded

by Jason Alderman

A key feature in last year's economic stimulus bill was the federal income tax credit designed to help first-time homebuyers. Now, as part of legislation signed by President Obama in November 2009, that tax credit has been extended – as well as expanded to include a credit for current homebuyers looking to buy a new primary residence.

Here's how it works:

The deadline for the first-time homebuyer credit was extended to include purchases where a binding contract is signed by April 30, 2010, and closed by June 30, 2010. A few rules:

*"First-time homebuyers" are those who have not owned a home during the previous three years.

*The credit is worth 10 percent of the purchase price, up to a credit limit of \$8,000 on homes costing \$800,000 or less; homes priced above that are ineligible.

*Qualifying income thresholds have been raised to \$125,000 in modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) for individuals and \$225,000 for married couples filing jointly, from the previous \$75,000 and \$150,000, respectively. (MAGI is usually found on line 38 of your federal income tax return).

*The credit phases out for individuals with MAGI between \$125,000 and \$145,000 and \$225,000 to \$245,000 for joint filers.

*If you are married, both you and your spouse must qualify as first-time homebuyers to receive the credit; also, each of you must be at

least 18 years old at closing and neither can be claimed as another taxpayer's dependent.

*Purchase transactions between immediate family members are not eligible.

*You must attach a copy of the purchase settlement agreement to your tax return.

*You must repay the credit if, within three years of purchase, the home is no longer your primary residence. (Certain exceptions will be made for military personnel and when one of the homeowners dies.)

*Qualified housing includes newly constructed or existing single-family houses, condominiums, manufactured or mobile homes – even boats that function as your principal residence.

*You can claim the tax credit for a 2010 purchase on either your 2009 (via an amended return, if necessary) or 2010 taxes.

The good news in this bill for current homeowners is that they too may qualify for a tax credit if they want to move to a new primary residence, whether because of a job transfer, downsizing at retirement or moving to a larger home or a new community. Although the same income thresholds, purchase cost limit and closing deadlines apply, there are a few unique features:

*Instead of \$8,000, the maximum credit amount is \$6,500.

*You must have lived in your current home for five consecutive years out of the last eight.

*The newly purchased home must become your primary residence and not a second home or investment property.

*You are not required to sell your current residence.

To learn more, visit www.federalhousingtaxcredit.com. Because of the complexity of tax law governing these transactions, consult your tax advisor before finalizing a purchase or deciding which year to claim the credit.

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We Can Help You!

Complete Immigration documents, assist with SF County paperwork (Medi-Cal, Welfare, etc.), education workshops, referrals to other services

Eight Weeks Nutrition Classes

Every Wednesday
January 27 to March 17
4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Speaker: Dina Castellon
Community Health
Program Representative

Drop-In Consultation with Mental Health Consultant

Thursday, February 4, 11,
18 and 25, 1 to 5 p.m.

Call (415) 342-4364
for appointment.

February 2010 Activities

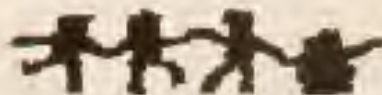
Enhanced Information and Referral
Every Monday Through Friday
February 1 to 28, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Spanish Support Group
Friday, February 5 and 19, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Chinese Support Group
Friday, February 12 and 26
9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Family Fun Literacy
Rhymes
Thursday, February 19, 4:30 to 6 p.m.

Marichelle Punzalan, Jenny Sosa
Jack Kwong, Kevin Blackwell, Molly Hassler



Eight Weeks Parenting Classes Improving Parent and Child Relationship, Part 1

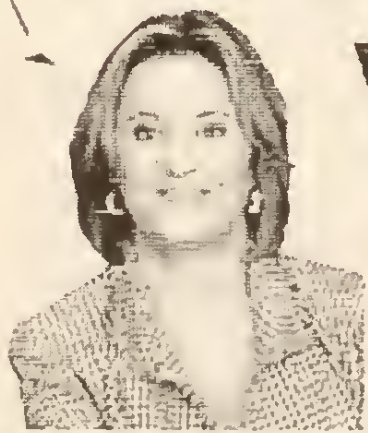
Every Tuesday
January 12 to March 2
4:30 to 6 p.m.

Male Involvement Group

Saturday,
February 6
1 to 3 p.m.



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for a long Time.

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